

Washington, DC— On Monday, Rep. Steve Israel (D – New York) launched a new online effort to solicit ideas from Long Islanders on how to simplify the federal tax code.

“The federal tax code is more than 70,000 pages long, creating loopholes for those who can find them and confusion for many families and small business owners. In his State of the Union address, the President challenged Democrats and Republicans to work together on simplifying the tax code. I believe we must accept that challenge and I want to hear from Long Islanders about what changes they would make. I invite everyone to visit my website at www.israel.house.gov to take the online survey and share their ideas,” said Rep. Israel.

The non-partisan Tax Policy Center states, “Simpler taxes could improve the tax code in at least two important ways. First, simpler taxes would lower taxpayers’ costs of complying with the tax system in terms of time, money, and mental anguish, thus reducing the overall burden of taxation. Second, tax provisions that are simpler are more likely to be used. Provisions aimed at encouraging certain activities, such as saving for college, will be less effective if people cannot understand how they work and therefore do not use them.”

According to a 2007 report by the National Taxpayers Union, taxpayers spend an estimated 3.18 billion hours complying with the income tax laws annually at a cost of \$26.5 billion for tax software, tax preparers, postage and other expenses.

Rep. Israel’s survey is available via his website at www.israel.house.gov.